

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1374

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 7980

E.O. 11652: AGDS

TAGS: PFOR, VT, US

SUBJECT: VATICAN IMPRESSIONS OF PRESIDENTIAL VISIT

1. ITALIAN MINISTER COUNSELOR TO HOLY SEE INFORMED US THAT HE WAS TOLD BY HIGH-LEVEL VATICAN OFFICIAL THIS MORNING THAT POPE PAUL WAS EXTREMELY PLEASED WITH HIS MEETING YESTERDAY WITH THE PRESIDENT. POPE PAUL REPORTEDLY STATED THAT HE FOUND PRESIDENT FORD A MAN WHO UNDERSTOOD AND SHARED HIS BELIEF IN THE IMPORTANCE OF A SOUND MORAL AND SPIRITUAL BASIS FOR AN INTERNATIONAL ORDER. POPE PAUL, MOREOVER, DESCRIBED THE PRESIDENT AS A SINCERE AND WARM MAN WITH WHOM HE FELT IT HAD BEEN EASY TO ESTABLISH A FRUITFUL RELATIONSHIP ON WHICH HE HOPES TO BUILD IN THE FUTURE. ACCORDING TO SOURCE, VATICAN SEEMS TO FEEL THAT MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF MEETING WAS THE SUCCESSFUL ESTABLISHMENT OF A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE POPE AND THE PRESIDENT. VATICAN ALSO ATTACHED CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE TO THE CONTINUED STABILITY OF LEBANON WHOSE PRESENT CONFESSIONAL CO-EXISTENCE, THEY BELIEVE, COULD SERVE AS AN EXAMPLE TO OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE AREA FACING SIMILAR PROBLEMS.

2. ARCHBISHOP CASAROLE, IN DISCUSSIONS WITH ILLING AND SARROS EVENING JUNE 3, ALSO EXPRESSED GREAT SATISFACTION ON BEHALF OF THE VATICAN FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE VISIT AND WAS PARTICULARLY PLEASED TO HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO MEET THE SECRETARY AND THE PRESIDENT. VOLPE

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